

Dear Friends:

The mission of The New York Botanical Garden—to serve as an advocate for the plant kingdom through horticulture, science, and education—has never been more important than it is today. Over the course of the 117 years since the Botanical Garden’s founding, the Board and staff have remained committed to fulfilling this responsibility by offering the finest programs to visitors of all ages, enhancing and maintaining our facilities, conducting groundbreaking botanical research at home and abroad, and carefully stewarding the living collections found throughout our 250-acre campus.

One of the many accomplishments of fiscal year 2008, albeit behind the scenes, was the completion of a detailed programmatic, capital, and financial plan to guide the Garden over the course of the next seven years. After 20 months of in-depth competitive analysis and strategic planning that involved members of the Board and staff at all levels, *A New Strategic Plan: Into the 21st Century, 2009-2015* was developed and approved by the Board. Designed to build upon and advance the renaissance of this historic institution that began 17 years ago, the new plan encompasses major initiatives in horticulture, enhancement of educational programs and facilities, expansion of plant science research efforts, and modernization of the Library. The myriad achievements that you will read about in the pages that follow have positioned the Garden well to fulfill the ambitious goals of *A New Strategic Plan*.

Two landmark Garden-wide exhibitions helped to define fiscal year 2008. *Kiku: The Art of the Japanese Chrysanthemum* was a magnificent culmination of a multi-year cultural exchange and international collaboration between Garden staff and experts at Shinjuku Gyoen National Garden in Tokyo. The most elaborate flower show and cultural exhibition ever presented by the Garden, *Kiku* is back for a repeat performance in the new fiscal year. *Darwin’s Garden: An Evolutionary Adventure* featured a stunning horticultural exhibition in the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory. A scholarly display in the LuEsther T. Mertz Library’s William D. Rondina and Giovanni Foroni LoFaro Gallery included some of Charles Darwin’s own field notebooks. A two-day symposium, in collaboration with the American Museum of Natural History, brought together international scientists, historians, and philosophers for a series of discussions focused on the continuing impact of Darwin’s work.

Science at the Garden achieved great success last year, including a rarely awarded license from the U.S. Department of Treasury allowing our scientists to travel to Cuba and collaborate on research projects with local scientists. This is quite a coup as well as an incredible opportunity to conduct fieldwork on the most species-rich island in the West Indies. In further recognition of the importance of the research endeavors of Garden scientists, significant grants were awarded from prestigious foundations for ongoing initiatives in the Garden’s Caribbean Biodiversity Program, for expansion of the Garden’s leadership role in the cutting-edge field of plant DNA barcoding, and for continuing efforts to digitize herbarium type specimens of Latin America.

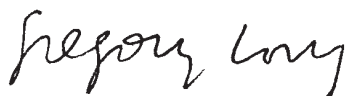
The Garden’s educational efforts continued to focus on cultivating our audiences’ horticultural expertise at all age and experience levels, from Peapod Explorers programs for pre-schoolers to professional development workshops for teachers to topical lectures for garden aficionados. A new program for middle-school students, *GardenWorks: An Internship at The New York Botanical Garden*, a collaborative venture with the Bronx Institute at Lehman College, was launched. The opening of the Everett Garden Gate, a new entrance designated especially for school groups, enabled the Garden to better serve the more than 240,000 children, educators, and families who visited last year to participate in our world-renowned informal science education programs.

The dedication and leadership of the Garden’s Board has helped make all of the above, as well as the numerous accomplishments highlighted in the pages that follow, possible. With the commitment of the Board, the friendship and generosity of our members, patrons, and donors, and the partnership of the city, state, and federal governments, this historic institution is well-positioned to continue serving as an advocate for the plant kingdom while fulfilling its vital role as “America’s Garden.”

Please visit often this year so that you can not only wonder at the beauty of the changing seasons as they unfold throughout the Garden’s landscape but also see firsthand what your dedication and generosity have helped to support. We look forward to welcoming you.



Wilson Nolen, *Chairman*



Gregory Long, *President*